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SAFEGUARDING YOUR FOOD AND DRUGS -- NO. 8.

Tuesday, April 22, 1930

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A series of radio talks by W. R. M. Wharton, chief, Eastern District, Food, Drug and Insecticide Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, delivered Tuesday mornings at 10 a.m. Eastern Standard Time through Station WJZ, New York and the following other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company; KWK, St. Louis; WREN, Kansas City; KFAB, Lincoln, Nebr.; WRC, Washington; WBZA, Boston; KSTP, St. Paul; WSM, Nashville; WAPI, Birmingham; WJAX, Jacksonville, WPTF, Raleigh; and WRVA, Richmond.

Good morning my friends, I come to you each Tuesday morning as a representative of the United States Government, to tell you how your foods and drugs are safeguarded, and to tell you how to read labels. I am relating my personal experience in food law enforcement work, and some of my listeners have been good enough to write me to say that my talks are more interesting than fiction or mystery stories.

I am telling you how to read labels, in order that you may buy foods economically and in order that you may get exactly what you wish to purchase. This part of my talks may be likened to a university course in food composition. You hear my lecture, you write in and get a copy of it for study, you discuss the phases treated in your clubs, and with your friends, and you apply in your daily marketing the principles enunciated. Then you are ready for the next step: to listen to me for a new phase the next week.

If you have missed any of my previous talks, all you have to do is to write in for them. The READ LABEL club now numbers thousands. I want to add at least five hundred more this week, so write now.

I am going to talk to you today about how dried fruit doctors lost a profession; how a patent medicine formula was evolved dream fashion; and I am going to tell you more about how to read labels.

About Dried Fruit doctors losing a profession: Yes, this really happened. It is a commonly known fact that dried fruit when old, often becomes wormy, or moldy, or rancid, or rotten. Now, years ago there were in some of the large cities of the country, individuals doctoring spoiled dried fruits, so as to make them presentable for sale. These people bought up all kinds of old stocks of spoiled dried prunes, dried apples, dried apricots, dried peaches, and the like, - in no matter what condition. These they soaked, and brushed, and washed, and polished, and coated, often with glycerine, until an appearance of fresh, luscious dried fruit was presented, notwithstanding that indeed and in fact such fruits were still moldy, still rotten, and still unfit for food. And, my friends, some of this doctored fruit was sold at cheap prices to eleemosynary institutions, such as poor farms, and there fed to the inmates. Think of these helpless people receiving such food!

Your present speaker organized a campaign to break up the practice of doctoring dried fruits. Large quantities of the unfit food were seized, and federal prosecutions of the dried fruit crooks success-

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fully stopped all traffic in this class of material. Thus did the enforcement of the Food and Drugs Act permanently put a stop to a practice which was as despicable as it was unfair and improper.

Now friends, if it were true that a patent medicine formula could be handed down from on High, all of us, perhaps, would have an effective treatment for our ills. Certainly if we could be made to believe that a drug formula was of Divine origin, we would not hesitate to believe, likewise, the claims of curative value made on its labels. Upon these premises, the poor, the sick, the credulous have often been deceived, mislead, and defrauded. No more remarkable incident of this nature has ever occurred than is represented in an experience of your present speaker: A certain patent medicine was having a considerable sale in a southwestern State for the cure of Rheumatism, Pellagra, and other serious diseases. The product was on the Druggists' shelves, and it was sold by peddlers. The peddler always told his prospective customer the story of the divine origin of the formula for the product.

As is customary in the daily work of enforcing the Federal Food and Drugs Act, an investigation was made of this product. The manufacturer was visited and, after the formalities had been completed, the government inspector asked the manufacturer for a statement of the ingredients of the product on which the manufacturer relied for the carrying out of his promises to effect the cures which the labels specified. Then began a recitation from its original source, of the composition and origin of this alleged God given benefit to humanity: Said the manufacturer, "I suffered for eight years all of the pains which Rheumatism is capable of giving to the human body. I was doubled up and could not walk. I sat in a roller chair. I was about to die, and one afternoon while in half a doze, there came to me from heaven a revelation and I could see clearly a number, and I knew that this number represented a page in my family medicine book. So I got out the book and I turned to the page indicated, and there I found the name of a medicinal ingredient. I then waited until the next day and, at the same time, I had another sign from on high. This time another number, which my family medicine book showed to be another medicinal ingredient was revealed to me. This revelation continued for eight days. Always at the same time in the late afternoon, the Lord appeared to me and signified in His wisdom, through the method I have stated, a medicinal agent. These medicines I put together and used, and the result was that, <sup>in</sup> a few short weeks I was a well man. I then felt it my obligation to go out and save the rest of mankind from pain and sickness, with this God given boon to humanity.

This is the story which was told to me, and I have related it truthfully as it was related to me. I did not interrupt him, to inquire how or where this zealot obtained his information as to the proper quantities of the materials to use, or, how he knew that the numbers referred to his family medicine compendium. I did not ask him, why it was necessary to charge so high a price for the product, but I did ask him how it had occurred that he had labeled the product as a cure for Pellagra, when the Lord had prescribed it only for Rheumatism.

My friends, this product was essentially worthless in the treatment of diseases for which it was sold. It was proceeded against under the Federal Food and Drugs Act, a large quantity was seized on the charge of being falsely and fraudulently represented as an effective remedy for Pellagra, Rheumatism, etc., when, as a matter of truth and fact, it was not so effective. The manufacturer who had had divine guidance, did not depend upon his heavenly standing to aid him in court, indeed he failed to appear and it was ordered by the court that the product should be condemned and forfeited, and that the product be destroyed.

It is by actions such as these, under the Food and Drugs Act, that the labels of patent medicines are being cleaned of false and fraudulent medicinal claims.

Now for my read label information. The subject to be considered today is Flour and Meal.

Meal is the clean, sound product made by coarsely grinding grain.

Graham flour is unbolted wheat meal.

Maize meal, corn meal, Indian corn meal, is meal made from sound maize grain, and contains not more than 14 per cent of moisture, not less than 1.12 per cent of nitrogen, and not more than 1.6 per cent of ash.

Oatmeal is meal made from hulled oats, and contains not more than 12 per cent of moisture, not more than 1.5 per cent of crude fiber, not less than 2.24 per cent of nitrogen, and not more than 2.2 per cent of ash.

Flour is the fine, clean, sound product made by bolting wheat meal. It contains not more than 15 per cent of moisture, not less than 1.25 per cent of nitrogen, not more than 1 per cent of ash, and not more than 0.5 per cent of fiber.

Gluten flour is the clean, sound product made from wheat flour by the removal of a large part of the starch, and contains not more than 10 per cent of moisture, and, calculated on the water-free basis, not less than 7.1 per cent of nitrogen, not more than 56 per cent of nitrogen-free extract (using the protein factor 5.7), and not more than 44 per cent of starch (as determined by the diastase method.).

Ground gluten is the clean, sound product made from wheat flour by the almost complete removal of starch, and contains not more than 10 per cent of moisture, and, calculated on the water-free basis, not less than 14.2 per cent of nitrogen, not more than 15 per cent of nitrogen-free extract (using the protein factor 5.7), and not more than 5.5 per cent of starch (as determined by the diastase method.).

Buckwheat flour is bolted buckwheat meal, and contains not more than 12 per cent of moisture, not less than 1.28 per cent of nitrogen, and not more than 1.75 per cent of ash.

Rye Flour is the fine, clean, sound product made by bolting rye meal, and contains not more than 13.5 per cent of moisture, not less than 1.36 per cent of nitrogen, and not more than 1.25 per cent of ash.

Purified middlings is the clean, sound granular product obtained in the commercial process of milling wheat, and is that portion of the endosperm retained on 10 XX silk bolting cloth. It contains no more flour than consistent with good commercial practice, nor more than 15 per cent of moisture.

Semolina is the purified middlings of durum wheat.

Farina is the purified middlings of hard wheat other than durum.

Whole Wheat Flour has not yet been definitely and finally officially defined. The Standards Committee, however, about which I told you last week, issued some time ago a tentative definition for whole wheat flour which declares that whole wheat flour, entire wheat flour, graham flour shall be considered as the ground product of wheat, containing in their natural proportions all constituents of the grain, or, in other words, milled wheat without additions, subtractions or other manipulations. As I have told you, the Standards Committee does not act arbitrarily in fixing definitions and standards. Since these standards must represent consumer understanding and good trade practice the committee must have before it not only full knowledge as to the composition of the food to be defined but a composition recognized by the reputable manufacturers and <sup>most</sup> important of all its identity as understood by the consumer. The Standards Committee has recently received a very large number of letters from individuals on the schedule for whole wheat flour. This sort of information is invaluable, and, I have been told by the Chairman of the committee, will be of great assistance to the members when they meet the week of April 28. We want the public to understand that they are participants in the formulation of these definitions and standards and that all who are interested may secure copies of those which have already been published, and if they will make request to the Secretary of the Standards Committee will be placed on the mailing list to receive announcements as issued from time to time by the committee.

Flour is sometimes bleached with chlorine, with oxides of nitrogen, and other bleaching agents. Such flour must be labeled "Bleached Flour." So-called flour improvers such as phosphates, calcium salts, and other oxidizing agents are added occasionally to flour in small quantities, and when added, such materials must be declared by name on the label.

You will find the term Patent Flour or High Patent Flour on labels. These terms have a rather indefinite meaning. The word "Patent," applied formerly to a separation consisting of fifty per cent or less of selected white flour portions of the wheat, now is applied to flour differing widely in percentage, depending upon the practices of different mills.

We may sum up the commercial terms used in the flour trade as follows: Patent Flour, this has already been described; Straight Flour, meaning flour containing 100% of the white flour portion of the wheat; Clear flour, meaning the balance of the flour after patent flour has been

made; Low Grade Flour, meaning a product obtained by further separation of the clear grades. These grades, from Patent to Low Grade, represent flour with progressively increasing amounts of bran material.

Some flour labels declare the products to be made from Soft Wheat, and some from Hard Wheat. Soft winter wheat flours are high in starch and low in gluten; they are used chiefly in pastry and cake baking. The hard wheat flours are used chiefly in bread baking.

Remember, in reading bread labels, that the Federal Food and Drugs Act applies only to products shipped in interstate commerce.

Now, READ LABEL students, do not disappoint me this week, -- let me have your requests immediately for all the read label information which has been broadcast thus far and that which is to follow. Write to W. R. M. Wharton, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 201 Varick Street, New York City.

Next week at this hour I shall tell you about a gigantic vinegar swindle; about making cherry juice from the bark of the wild cherry tree; and I shall tell you more about reading labels.

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